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24 APR 1946

Support
MEMORANDUM FOR ~~INFORMATION~~ BRANCH AND INTELLIGENCE BRANCH

SUBJECT: Central Register of Intelligence Information

Reference: Planning Directive No. 25

1. The following outline notes bear upon the possibility of developing a central register of intelligence information.

2. The problem.

To provide an efficient central register of intelligence information in order better to coordinate and control intelligence research.

3. Discussion.

a. Extensive intelligence information material now exists in the several departments, filed in a manner presumably accessible to them. However, it is believed that the knowledge of what is there, and its value, depends upon the memories of individuals who maintain these files. It is known that they employ various personal devices for keeping track of this material. The accessibility of the material, therefore, is open to question since personnel transfers may destroy the continuity of accounting.

b. There is no device at present which furnishes accession lists to other intelligence agencies except by specific request. There is considerable need for such an exchange of information.

c. ~~(c)~~ It is now practically impossible for any agency to determine accurately and promptly what intelligence information is not available, either in its own files or in the files of any other agency. Additionally, it is not feasible to determine whether such information is current or has been invalidated by changes due to time or other cause.

d. The preparation of collection directives is not properly controlled due to the lack of the information outlined in subparagraphs above. This, however, points to another problem, the solution of which will follow logically any solution of the problem stated in these notes.

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3. Automatic mechanical means are currently employed by business concerns and governmental agencies for indexing, controlling, and analyzing extensive data of all kinds.

4. It appears likely that the punch card system could be employed substantially as follows. There would be maintained in each intelligence agency and if desired in the Central Reports Staff, a master card index continuously revised by daily additions and deletions. Reading panels in intelligence agencies would fill out data slips for each report received, which would then be punched into cards by clerks. This would provide accession lists to intelligence information received by that agency. The cards produced each day would be duplicated and supplied to all holders of the master index. Intelligence researchers would, by a similar means, produce punch cards which would delete from the master index those cards which were superseded by later information or found otherwise obsolete. Thus, daily, each of the intelligence agencies utilizing this system would have a continuous, late, revised master index.

5. The following is the type of information which any particular card could be made to show:

- (1) Subject material — subdivided by title, as detailed as might be desired.
- (2) The source
- (3) Date of report
- (4) Classification
- (5) Grade
- (6) Local file number and location.

6. A master index system such as the BID could be employed, but need not necessarily be exclusive, since each agency could add its own file number. This would render unnecessary the adoption of a single system and would make it possible to continue any system currently in use in the agency.

7. The above briefly outlined technique would make it possible to,

a. Provide instant accession to all indexed material by subject, title, source, date, classification, or grade.

b. Reject material graded obsolescent by research by automatic deletion from the master index.

c. Indicate rapidly and accurately weaknesses or deficiencies in coverage to the end that remedial action may be taken.

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g. Incidentally, provide techniques and means for statistical research and tabulations too laborious to be undertaken by manual methods.

h. No opportunity was afforded to discuss this problem with technicians and the above admittedly is only a brief outline of a possible plan. My slight familiarity with the IBM equipment leads me to believe that it offers the best solution for many problems in intelligence research. I shall be glad to discuss this matter with you.

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[REDACTED]
Captain, USN
Acting Chief, Central Planning Staff

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